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ABELARD TO ELOISA:

A

P O E M.

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By MR. JERNINGHAM.



L O N D O N:

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ABELARD TO ELIZABETH

P O E M

BY MR. JERININGHAM

PRINTED FOR J. BOWEN & CO. LONDON





TO THE  
EARL OF CARLISLE.

**I**N addressing this Poem to Your  
Lordship, I am endeavouring to ob-  
tain for it the sanction of a very skill-  
ful Judge ; of a Person who has himself  
adorned the poetical walk, and who  
has exalted the muse of Tragedy,

in that excellent composition, *The Father's Revenge*.

I have the honour to be, with the impression of the greatest regard,

Your LORDSHIP's,

Obedient humble Servant,

EDW<sup>d</sup>. JERNINGHAM.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**HE monastery of CLUNI, from whence ABELARD is supposed to write the following Epistle, was founded in the year 611, near the village of Mascon, on the river Graone. The Head of this convent (in the time of ABELARD) was distinguished for his learning and humanity. History elevates him above the vulgar herd of monks by the appellation of the Venerable PETER! He extended his generous protection to the unfortunate ABELARD, when he was under the censure of the court of Rome.

SAINT BERNARD also is connected with the story of Paraclete. This great man stands eminently forward in the picture of the twelfth century: Born with a mind too restless and enterprising to be confined within the circle of monastic occupations, he rushed into the tu-

†

mult



mult of active life, and took the lead in some of the most important transactions of that period. With an undisciplined ardour peculiar to his character, he precipitated his country into that ruinous measure, the second crusade. Behold him at another time hastening to the contest that held all EUROPE in suspense, which exhibited two contending candidates for the papedom. The authority and vehemence of BERNARD overpowered the pretensions of ANACLETUS, and INNOCENT was seated on the papal throne. The enemies of this celebrated Abbot never impeached his moral character; but it must be allowed that in his zeal against the innovation of new opinions, he has sometimes left unregarded the superior duty of charity. A letter of his to the Cardinal GUIDO, the pope's legate in France, contains the most intolerant and sanguinary counsel: His persecution however of ABELARD was prompted (according to the opinion of some authors) by an impulse of jealousy, alarmed at the splendid literary reputation of so young a person.

ABELARD in the following epistle lays a considerable stress upon his sentence of excommunication: In the dark ages, that spiritual humiliation was felt as the greatest calamity; the relation, the parent, the lover, the friend, suspended their endearing offices, and withdrew from the degraded offender.

11 7 19

*ABELARD*

And in the following table is a condensed  
first upon his sentence of excommunication: In the  
dark ages, that spiritual punishment was felt as the  
greatest calamity; the relation, the parent, the lover,  
the friend, (supported their enduring efforts, and with-  
draw from the degraded offender.



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## ABELARD TO ELOISA.

**Y**ON midnight bell, that frights the peaceful air !  
Commands the Fathers to their wonted pray'r :  
Now in long order flows the sable throng,  
Like a dark, fullen stream that creeps along :  
Why joins not ABELARD the fainted train ?  
Does torpid sloth his ling'ring steps detain ?  
These walls, that pillow steep'd in tears, attest  
That sleep is exil'd from this tortur'd breast :  
This lamp proclaims the same, whose trembling beam  
Guides while my hand pursues the glowing theme :  
While the dread secret from my soul I tear,  
And unreserv'd my bosom'd feelings bear.  
Ah me ! the passion that my soul misled  
Was check'd, not conquer'd ; buried, but not dead :

Now bursting from the grave, in evil hour,  
 It hastens to its prey with fiercer pow'r,  
 And, vulture-like, with appetite increas'd  
 It riots on the undiminish'd feast.  
 Daughter of Paraclete dost thou complain  
 In iron silence that I lock'd my pain?  
 That not to thee (soft solacer in woe)  
 I bad the troubled waves of Anguish flow?  
 Methought the course of three long years' retreat  
 Would scarce thy length'ning sacrifice complete:  
 Methought I should profane the hallow'd rite,  
 Did my laments thy pitying ear affright:  
 Thus at the altar, wrapt in holy dread,  
 The youth of Macedon in silence bled,  
 Nor from his tortur'd and consuming hand  
 Dismiss'd the living close-adhering brand\*.  
 But now thy slow inauguration's o'er,  
 And thou hast reach'd Religion's tranquil shore,  
 Now that stern habit throws without controul  
 Her chain of adamant around thy soul,

\* Alluding to the boy at Athens, who, while he was assisting at a religious ceremony, endured a burning coal that fell on his hand, rather than disturb the sacrifice.

May not th' unhappy ABELARD disclose  
 (To her who pities most) his train of woes?

Ye sullen gates, within whose bound confin'd  
 The wretch who enters flings his joys behind!  
 Emerging from the dome, ye crowding spires,  
 Which sun-robed glitter like ascending fires!  
 That funeral spot with many a cypress spread,  
 Where shriek the spirits of the guilty dead!  
 Yon moping forest, whose extensive sway  
 Admits no lucid interval of day,  
 No cheering vista with a trail of light  
 Flies thro' the heavy gloom of lasting night:  
 Ye hermitages, deep immers'd in wood,  
 Wash'd by the passing tributary flood,  
 Whose easy waves, soft-murm'ring as they roll,  
 Lull the strong goadings of the feeling soul:  
 Ye tow'ring rocks, to wonder's eye address'd,  
 Mishapen piles by Terror's hand impress'd!—



Ah, not these scenes magnificently rude  
To Virtue's lore have ABELARD subdued.

When late my steps drew near the peopled choir,  
What erring wishes did my heart inspire?  
To the deep mysteries as I advanced,  
Still in thy presence was my soul entranced:  
While, bending to the earth, the choral throng  
Pause, 'ere they usher the emphatic song;  
While kneeling seraphs, trembling as they glow,  
Veil with their radiant wings their bashful brow;  
While the deep organ (as by fear controul'd)  
Its solemn sound like distant thunder roll'd;  
While thick'ning odours dim'd the dread abode,  
And th' altar shudder'd at th' approaching God!—  
'Midst these august, terrific rites unmov'd,  
My guilty thoughts to other altars rov'd:  
In Love enchas'd, a dearer image blest  
That living chapel, my impassion'd breast!

Where

Where burns a hungry and insatiate flame  
 To that soft deity I blush to name:  
 Those hours to recollection spring renew'd,  
 When Passion urg'd us, and when Pleasure woo'd;  
 When, captur'd by Desire's voluptuous hold,  
 Involv'd—combin'd—embodied—and in soul'd—  
 Forbear . . . . Let dim Oblivion cast behind,  
 Words that would soil thy purity of mind:  
 Recall, recall that interesting hour,  
 When in the flush of Youth, and Beauty's flow'r,  
 (Ah! doom'd, severely doom'd, to meet no more)  
 When from each dearer self our forms we tore,  
 How, to Affection's finer touch consign'd,  
 My face upon thy summer cheek inclin'd,  
 Felt as it dropt thy tear's celestial dew,  
 While sighs, not words, breath'd forth our last adieu.  
 Intruding Fancy rais'd the veil between,  
 And shew'd Futurity's unwelcome scene,  
 Nights of long absence that expect no dawn,  
 Divorcing gulphs that must for ever yawn.

In thy pure soul a purer self I trac'd  
 Our glowing minds with energy embrac'd,  
 Whence th' intellectual progeny arose  
 Which kindred fears and kindred hopes compose,  
 Endearments tending to one mutual aim,  
 The same our sorrow and our joy the same.

Now that thy spirit is divinely wrought,  
 To nobler objects flies thy soaring thought;  
 For free and unrestrain'd of human ties,  
 Thy soul uncaptiv'd springs into the skies!  
 To Contemplation's height sublime you sail,  
 While wings seraphic aid the hallow'd gale;  
 From man to God! Perfection's dazzling source,  
 Unwearied you pursue your bright'ning course,  
 And as thro' station'd angels you advance,  
 Send on the throne of Heav'n a daring glance.  
 For me, unequal to this dizzy height,  
 Undisciplin'd, unwing'd for mystic flight,

To



To speed the ling'ring step of cloyster hours,  
 To science I consign'd my mental pow'rs :  
 Fame met me in her path, and round my brow  
 Engarlanded the wreath of Splendor's glow.  
 Then swell'd, disturb'd with Envy's with'ring pow'r,  
 The serpent Bernard his'd within my bow'r,  
 Pour'd the black venom with insidious aim,  
 Chill'd my soul's health, and dimm'd my radiant name :  
 Still, still inventing some malignant plan ;  
 Impetuous, turbulent, vindictive man !  
 Behind the simple, meek, monastic vest,  
 Ambition blazes in his troubled breast.  
 Averse amid the pensive shades to dwell,  
 He shuns the stillness of the lonely cell,  
 Embroils the contests that involve the great,  
 Deepens the storm that darkens o'er the state,  
 And like the bird of Jove by vengeance driv'n,  
 Bears in his grasp th' artillery of Heav'n !  
 See Anacletus, trembling at his frown,  
 To Innocent resign the doubtful crown :

Mark, at the impulse of his bold command,  
 The throng that hastens to the palmy land :  
 See to his gaudy levee crouds resort ;  
 See the gay tinsel'd foplings of the court :  
 There too the hoary sages of the law,  
 And military chiefs approach with awe ;  
 There abbots, princes, cardinals, advance,  
 And all the splendor, all the pride of France

As not unworthy of his fainted rage,  
 Now meaner objects tread his busy stage ;  
 He bids thy ABELARD ascend the scene,  
 And pours the torrent of his holy spleen :  
 Then Persecution with resistless sway,  
 Thro' her long-sounding flood-gates burst away ;  
 Her armory the Vatican display'd,  
 In all its proud magnificence array'd ;  
 From whence abrupt th' avenging Pontiff sprung,  
 And at my peace the bolt of terror flung.

While

While o'er her victim (to dishonour led)

Her cloud of iron extirpation spread.

Now the pale outcast both of Heav'n and earth,  
 I curs'd the day that glimmer'd on my birth :  
 Degraded—shunn'd—to infamy allied,  
 Amidst the ruins of my soul I cried,  
 No more my image to her thought adjoin'd  
 Shall share the heav'n of ELOISA's mind :  
 No more (I cried) my reprobated name  
 Shall from her lips its daily honour claim,  
 No longer to the throne of God repair,  
 Borne on the wings of her triumphant pray'r.  
 Now frenzy urg'd my wild'ring steps to rove  
 Beneath the night of yon extensive grove :  
 Now urg'd along the mountain's top to range  
 (Despair still haunting me thro' ev'ry change)  
 To tread th' advent'rous path that coasts the brow  
 Which frowls tremendous o'er the vale below :

Then



Then to the summit of yon rock I toil'd,  
 That shoots its crags fantastically wild !  
 There rush'd upon my view the hallow'd crosses,  
 Cloath'd in the garb of venerable moss !  
 This wonted pledge of mercy and delight  
 Struck on my fading hope a dark'ning blight ;  
 No more the saving all-atoning rood,  
 The grisly symbol of revenge it stood !  
 Lost in the extacy of strong despair,  
 With madd'ning hand I tore my rooted hair.—  
 'Twas then the fear of warm compassion came  
 To lull my tortures and dispel my shame :  
 " Desist," the Priest of Charity began,  
 " And own once more the dignity of man !  
 " No longer Rome and ABELARD are foes,  
 " The thunders of the Vatican repose ;  
 " The holy church, by my remonstrance won,  
 " Takes to her bosom her still darling son."  
 Hail to the tidings of that cheering voice  
 That bids the humbled ABELARD rejoice !

That bids his image to her thought rejoin'd,  
Still share the heav'n of ELOISA's mind.

Yet not thy person (that attractive sight)  
Diffusing round ineffable delight,  
Nor thy discourse, illum'd with Wisdom's ray,  
Which with soft rapine steals the soul away :  
That eye, where meek Dominion holds her throne ;  
That voice, where Music smoothes her softest tone ;  
By liberal Nature prodigally giv'n,  
(What words can't paint) that smile of opening Heav'n :  
These various charms that pass all human praise,  
These charms that once adorn'd my happier days,  
No more shall I behold—tis folly to complain,  
Those days of splendor ne'er must rise again.  
Adieu thou mistress of enchanting pow'r !  
Thou blissful vision of a transient hour !  
For such appears (to Fancy still how dear)  
The sloping race of Rapture's swift career,

When Heav'n enforcing its benign decree,  
 With lavish bounty gave thy form to me.

Hope now is dead, and Pleasure's knell is rung;  
 With sable thoughts my dreary mind is hung.  
 'Twas at the hour when from the sorrowing view,  
 The glowing God of day his beams withdrew,  
 When Vesper all her pageantry display'd,  
 Fretting the sky with many an awful shade:  
 Here trees appear'd that struggled with the storm,  
 There a wan cloud assum'd a spectre's form:  
 A solitary hand here grasp'd a spear,  
 There angry meteors combated in air:  
 Now riding on the wind with threat'ning mien,  
 The dark, terrific phantom Death was seen:  
 From a thick vapour's dread unfolding womb  
 Now bodied forth the likeness of a tomb:  
 Thy form, oh ELOISE, I clearly traced,  
 Thine airy arms the sepulchre embraced:

That



That mimic tomb my early fate foreshews,  
 While my foul labours with prophetic throes :  
 Now closes fast my short disastrous day,  
 To life's dark boundary I haste away.  
 The virtuous CLUNI still relieves my pains,  
 To thee will he convey my cold remains :  
 This kind assurance mitigates my doom,  
 Thou'lt stand the guardian angel at my tomb :  
 Clos'd be this form in ELOISA's fane,  
 She'll sigh my requiem with a Lover's strain :  
 Oft to my grave with sorrowful delight  
 Will she repair, as glooms the thick'ning night :  
 Burst from thy cloud, oh Cynthia, burst away,  
 The holy shadow of her frame display !  
 Let the soft texture of her length'ning shade  
 Repose along the spot where mine is laid !  
 Were thus her presence to my wishes giv'n,  
 Death would rejoice, my grave would then be Heav'n !

Forgive

Forgive this last effusion of a heart  
 Which Love and Nature form'd unstain'd by Art ;  
 Which midst the fears that wait on Death's decree,  
 With all its wonted ardor darts to thee.

Prepare, prepare for that relentless day  
 When the dark hearse this form shall bear away !  
 When to the fane of Paraclete convey'd,  
 My humble bier shall at thy feet be laid :  
 Prepare, prepare—throw back the vestal gate,  
 Receive the victim of untimely fate :  
 Receive the Youth misfortune held to view  
 Still mid his woes invariably true :  
 That Youth (from other strong affections free)  
 Whose life was one continued hymn to thee :  
 That Youth whom passion rushing on his breast  
 With tort'ring and extatic hand impress'd.  
 Prepare, prepare—yet check the bursting moan,  
 Thou to compassion exquisitely prone !

Left glowing sympathy, with Death at strife,  
 Should kindle my cold ashes into life,  
 And my rous'd voice invading Nature's laws  
 Breathe in loud accents terrible applause.

Yet will my soul pour forth another claim....  
 Ah me ! what sudden langour chills my frame ?...  
 My tremulous and feeble hand denies  
 Its function . . . gath'ring vapours cloud my eyes . . .  
 Of all that passion dictated of mine,  
 If now I touch the sad, the closing line,  
 If 'ere these words thy pity shall implore,  
 This warm and raving heart shall throb no more ?  
 Farewell—Be thou with added years still blest—  
 Ah, let me live in thy recording breast.

11:7:19

*F I N I S.*



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